

August 19, 2014

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Flagstaff Parks and Recreation Committee:

Nate Avery, during his unfortunately shortened lifetime, was a compassionate, giving individual who contributed more to the world and his community than most people ever dream of giving. The modest estimate of 1500 people gathered at Nate's Celebration of Life, only begins to show the impact Nate had on his community. The website www.nateavery.info overflows with stories of Nate's impact on so many lives. And now, two years since his unfortunate passing, the incredible number of BLE ("Best Life Ever") stickers on vehicles in town (as well as out of town) grows exponentially. Nate made a profound impact on his community during his life as well as in his passing.

Nate gave without trying—it was his humble nature. He loved and believed in people and always made everyone feel important and special, no matter their career or walk of life. He took a genuine interest in people and knew he had something to learn from everyone. The beauty of that is, while he was busy learning from everyone, he was simultaneously giving—giving the gift of love and compassion to every single person he encountered—even the stranger at the gas station.

As a neurosurgeon, Nate helped and healed countless individuals with his amazing skill and attentive bedside manner, always becoming more than just a doctor to his patients. As a community member, Nate and his wife, Annette, made generous contributions to numerous organizations working to improve lives of all who live in Flagstaff. As a neighbor, Nate was just another guy down the street always willing to lend a helping hand. In the winters, Nate would be seen driving the neighborhood in his orange dodge, loaded with a snowplow and truck full of kids having fun, ready to help dig out any neighbor in need. If someone were running low on firewood, Nate would show up with a truckload of wood and unload it. Who knows how many neighbors he stitched up on his kitchen counter on the weekends? Nate would "kidnap" the kids and the dog (he wasn't even a fan of dogs—so he said) to play for the afternoon, which would then turn into evening and Nate feeding everyone dinner. Neighborhood kids had a constant presence at the Avery house because inevitably Nate was in the garage working on some cool project in which they could be involved. For many of the kids in the "hood", he filled the role of being the "fun dad". He was always there for advice on a problem—no matter the subject of the problem: car issues; electrical; mechanical; woodworking; art; child rearing; boats—you name it. Whenever a baby was present, Nate was the guy soothing it, cuddling it and working his magic like no other could. Nate was always there to help someone in need.

Nate was a busy man with a high pressured, successful career. He could have been arrogant and self-centered, but he was the complete opposite. He often would have preferred to be called a plumber rather than a neurosurgeon. Nate could have chosen to become a renowned neurosurgeon at a famous, high-tech, advanced hospital, yet he chose to return to his hometown of Flagstaff, where he knew he could make a difference. There he dedicated his life and skills to improving the lives for all of us that live in Flagstaff and surrounding areas. And that he most definitely accomplished. Nate always gave to our community, striving to make it a better place to live not only for himself but also for each and every one of us. He always somehow managed to make time for everyone—his kids, wife, friends, colleagues, neighbors, patients, and the stranger at the gas station. Nate Avery was a man who epitomized living life to its fullest—every single day. He packed in the adventure, took advantage of every single moment with a smile on his face, and made it all look easy and painless.

Nate's favorite place to run was Buffalo Park. We think it would be a very fitting honor and tribute to Nate to rename the Buffalo Park trail the Nate Avery Trail. Nate paid life forward and inadvertently taught everyone he encountered how to be a better human being. If we could all learn from Nate and give of ourselves—just a little—the world would be a better place. Nate and his legacy are an inspiration for all—whether you knew him or not. Renaming the trail would be an appropriate reminder for all of Flagstaff that life is fleeting and that we should all try to live our Best Life Ever. This would be a well-deserved honor for such an incredibly dedicated, inspirational and giving member of our community.

Respectfully,

Katherine and Dave Spillman
Paul Berg and Jen Saunders
Liza vonRosenstiel and Phil Pearl

Maureen Avery Meyer
Becky and Chris Thomas
Karen Haubensak & Dave Able
Sherri and Dave Corcoran
Matt and Caroline Marks
Jeff and Theresa Bierer
Jaima and Chuck Peterson Family
Mark and Susan Bierer
Helen-Marie and Paul Holmgren
Diane and Brent Wood
Beverly Macallister and E. Karl Isbrecht
Chris Gunn
Jean Goodrich Patchin
Dave Wagner
Bonny Sands and Will Grundy
Charlie Mikulewicz
Debra Block and Dave Rudakewich
The Reverend Ann Johnson
Mary Ellen and Ken Mylrea
Bill and Sheryll Gibson
Jane Reukema
Lori and Jon Gauld